

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-12
HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 MCT-02 /094 W
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O 221204Z AUG 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2209
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 4889

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: ALL PARTIES MEETING

REF: USUN 03193

1. FOLLOWING ARE MY COMMENTS ON REFTEL.

2. I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THERE IS MORE FLEXIBILITY
IN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S POSITION THAN APPEARS ON THE
SURFACE. WE HAVE HAD ADMISSIONS OF THIS FROM BOTH
CHINAMANO OF INTERNAL ZAPU AND EXTERNAL ZAPU LEADERS
INCLUDING NKOMO HIMSELF WHO EXPLAINED THAT HE IS NOT
PREPARED TO MAKE FINAL CONCESSIONS TO INTERMEDIARIES,
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ONLY TO SMITH HIMSELF. THEREFORE, THE SUCCESS OF ANY
ALL-PARTIES MEETING OR ROUND TABLE TALKS (WE ARE AVOIDING
THE PHRASE "ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE" WHICH BECAUSE OF
ITS ASSOCIATION WITH GENEVA OFFENDS SALISBURY GROUP),
ON THE MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED THERE WILL DEPEND IN
PART ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PF'S INTENTION TO
NEGOTIATE. WE ARE STILL NOT CONVINCED THAT MUGABE IS

SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATIONS. THE PRESENT SITUATION SUITES HIS PURPOSE ADMIRABLY, AS TO A CERTAIN DEGREE IT ALSO DOES NKOMO. HIS INTERNAL RIVALS ARE BEING WEAKENED DAILY BY THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH SMITH IN A LOSING CAUSE, WHILE THEY THEMSELVES GROW IN STRENGTH. HOWEVER, THERE IS PROBABLY A MAXIMUM POINT IN THIS CURVE. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN IS THE INCREASING DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION IN ZAMBIA AND MOZAMBIQUE WHERE THE FRONT LINE LEADERS THERE ARE WITH GROWING BOLDNESS DEMANDING SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS FROM THE PF. ZAPU AND ZANU'S OWN CONTROL OVER THEIR ARMED FORCES IS WEAKENING AS THEIR ORGANIZATIONS GROW. THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE ARMIES INCREASES AND COMMUNICATIONS ARE STRAINED. NKOMO'S INTERNAL PARTY, AT LEAST, IS MUCH FRANKER IN RECOGNIZING THE DANGERS OF PUSHING THE MILITARY CONFLICT BEYOND THE PLACE WHERE IT CAN BE CONTROLLED BY THE POLITICAL LEADERS. IN SHORT, THERE IS A BEGINNING OF A RELIZATION OF THE DANGER THAT A MILITARY VICTORY COULD MEAN A LOSS FOR THE PRESENT POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF AT LEAST ZAPU AND VERY POSSIBLY ZANU ALSO.

3. FURTHERMORE, THE MILITARY SITUATION INSIDE THE COUNTRY IS NOT QUITE AS DESCRIBED IN REFTTEL. I DOUBT THAT THE PF LEADERS FEEL THEY CONTROL ACCESS TO MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRY. IF THEY DO, THEY ARE WRONG.
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THERE IS NO AREA WHICH CAN NOW BE DENIED ACCESS TO THE RHODESIAN DEFENSE FORCES. THERE IS NOW NO POSSIBILITY FOR INSTANCE OF ZIPRA OR ZANLA SETTING UP A "LIBERATED AREA". WHAT THE PF CAN DO IS DENY TO THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT GROUP AND THE RHODESIAN DEFENSE FORCES THE COOPERATION OF THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA IN CARRYING OUT THEIR MARCH 3 AGREEMENT. BUT THE SAME IS TRUE IN REVERSE. INTIMIDATION IS BEING APPLIED IN BOTH DIRECTION. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT COULD NOT OBTAIN THE COOPERATION OF THE PEOPLE IN A POSITIVE EFFORT EITHER. FOR INSTANCE, THE PF MIGHT BE ABLE TO DENY THE POSSIBILITY OF ELECTIONS TO THE SALISBURY REGIME, BUT IT COULD NOT RUN THEM ITSELF.

4. I BELIEVE IT WOULD ALSO BE A MISTAKE TO VIEW THE DYNAMICS OF THE SITUATION INSIDE RHODESIA FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF US LEGISLATION ON SANCTIONS. IT HAS A CERTAIN PERIPHERAL EFFECT ON THE SITUATION BUT NO MORE THAN THAT. HOWEVER ENCOURAGING SMITH MIGHT FIND THE LANGUAGE OF THE REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HE CAN CONDUCT AN ELECTION WITH ANYTHING BEYOND MINIMAL

PARTICIPATION OF THE POPULATION AND A PROHIBITIVELY HIGH LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. THOUGH THE LANGUAGE OF THE COMMITTEE REPORT MAY SERVE AS AN INVITATION TO SMITH TO MAKE A PRO FORMA ATTEMPT AT AN ALL PARTIES MEETING AND THEN GO AHEAD WITH AN ELECTION, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THIS IS POSSIBLE. TO BELIEVE HE WOULD ATTEMPT IT PROBABLY GIVES TOO MUCH WEIGHT TO US LEGISLATION AS A FACTOR IN THE PRESENT SIUTATION HERE IN RHODESIA. IN FACT, EVEN IF SANCTIONS WERE LIFTED TOMORROW, IT WOULD DO NO MORE THAN GIVE A TEMPORARY LIFT TO THE SITUATION HERE. THOUGH SMITH MAY BE A DIE HARD, MORE AND MORE PEOPLE INSIDE THE COUNTRY RECOGNIZE THAT A SOLUTION IS NECESSARY. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TEMPORARY WINDFALLS, ONLY LEADS THEM DEEPER INTO AN UNTENABLE SITUATION. CONFIDENTIAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 4889

FROM LOW

5. USUN IS CORRECT IN POINTING OUT THAT AS WE APPROACH AN ALL PARTIES MEETING, THE PRESENT SITUATION TENDS TO WIDEN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. THE PF'S GROWING MILITARY STRENGTH ENCOURAGES ITS INTERNAL INTRANSIGENCE WHILE THE CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE PROVIDES SOME ENCOURAGEMENT TO SMITH TO PERSIST IN THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT. WORKING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION ARE THE EXTERNAL PRESSURES WE CAN BRING TO BEAR FROM THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND SOUTH AFRICA AND THE GROWING EVIDENCE THAT THE MILITARY SITUATION ON THE GROUND MAY BE GETTING OUT OF HAND LEADING TO A DESTRUCTION WHICH NO ONE WITH AMBITIONS TO SURVIVE IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE WISHES TO SEE.

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6. SO FAR AS THE SUBJECTS TO DISCUSS AT AN ALL PARTIES MEETING ARE CONCERNED, USUN IS CORRECT THAT THEY WILL NOT BE THE SAME AS IN MALTA AND DAR. FOR ONE THING, WE WILL NOT BE CONFINED TO DISCUSSION OF THE AAP ALONE. I BELIEVE IF NKOMO REALLY WANTS A SOLUTION, HE WILL HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN CONFINING IT TO THAT. BASICALLY, AN EFFORT WILL BE DIRECTED AT DRAWING UP A NEW AGREEMENT. THE DISCUSSION THEREFORE WILL CENTER ON DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO APPROACHES (THE AAP AND INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.)
--THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE '69 CONSTITUTION.
--THE ROLE OF A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND WHO HE SHOULD BE.
-- THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL.
--THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION.
--AND THE ARMED FORCES AND POLICE DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD, AND CREATION OF A NEW ARMY.
EDMONDSON

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